

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:108
ANSWERED ON:22.11.2006
COMBATING HEPATITIS
Badiga Shri Ramakrishna

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India contributes nearly 20 per cent of the Hepatitis carriers in the world;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Union Government to prevent spread of Hepatitis in the country particularly in Andhra Pradesh?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS)

(a) & (b) As per the available estimates, India contributes to nearly 15% of the entire pool of Hepatitis-B virus carriers in the world.

(c) Hepatitis B spreads through unsafe sex, unsafe blood transfusion, unsafe injection etc. and also from mother to child. Hepatitis B is preventable by ensuring precautionary measures. The Government has launched a pilot project of immunization of Hepatitis B free of cost for children below one year only. Hepatitis B vaccination has commenced and is continuing in 15 cities including Hyderabad since 2002-03. The vaccination has also been commenced in 32 districts including two districts of Andhra Pradesh, namely Chittoor and Vizianagaram and Andaman and Nicobar Islands since 2003-04. While the general health care delivery system in the country is well equipped to handle various diseases, Hepatitis B is effectively tackled through preventive measures including vaccination. The following measures have been taken to prevent infection of Hepatitis B: -

Central Government Hospitals personnel at high risk are being immunised against Hepatitis B. State Governments have also been advised to take similar steps.

Guidelines have been issued for mandatory testing of blood in blood banks.

Promotion of safe sex under National AIDS Control Programme is advocated.

Health awareness campaigns regarding dangers of using non-sterile syringes and needles under National AIDS Control Programme are held.

Guidelines have been issued to State Health Authorities for use of separate sterile syringes and needles for each injection.

Vaccine for Hepatitis B is available in the country at affordable prices.